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SUPERFUND RECORDS



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# Cleanup posed for Oronogo, Duenweg mines

By Michael Flaherty  
Olathe News Service

WASHINGTON — Federal environmental officials Tuesday said Jasper County's mining district should be designated a hazardous waste site and qualify for money from the Superfund to help clean up the abandoned lead mines in the Joplin area.

The announcement could also mean the area will be eligible for funds from the state's program to clean up abandoned mine sites.

The Environmental Protection Agency on Tuesday released its seventh update of the National Priorities List, adding 229 new sites to the list of the nation's hazardous waste sites eligible for federal clean-up funds.

On the list is the Oronogo-Duenweg mining belt, part of the mining

By Wally Kennedy  
Globe Staff Writer

Its back to where it started 140 years ago.

The Environmental Protection Agency is proposing the placement of what it has dubbed the Oronogo-Duenweg Mining Belt on the National Priorities List of hazardous waste sites.

The mining belt, site of some of the earliest lead prospecting in the

area that extend into Kansas and Oklahoma. Mines in Cherokee County Kan., and Ottawa County Okla. were declared federal Superfund sites in 1983.

In Jasper County abandoned

Tri-State District might qualify for long-term cleanup action under the Superfund law.

If the Oronogo-Duenweg Mining Belt is placed on the list, it would mean that federal and state agencies are now working to correct the surface- and ground water pollution problems that exist at lead and zinc mining sites in each portion of the Tri-State District.

The mining began in Southwest Missouri, moved to Southeast Kan-

sas and then to Northeast Oklahoma. The Tar Creek site at Picher Okla. was placed on the National Priorities List in 1982. It was ranked as the worst site among 115 in the nation. Between 1982 and 1986, the EPA and state agencies spent \$57 million on the plugging of abandoned wells and water-diversion projects in the Picher field.

Six mining sites in Cherokee County Kan. were placed on the

list in 1983. The group of sites was ranked 56th among 538 nationwide.

Since then, the EPA and state agencies have committed more than \$11 million to a cleanup plan that addresses the water-pollution problems at Galena, the first site.

Efforts to place the Oronogo-Duenweg Mining Belt on the national list started in August 1985 when EPA investigators determined that conditions similar to those in Cherokee County Kan. were found at the

list in 1983. The group of sites was ranked 56th among 538 nationwide. Since then, the EPA and state agencies have committed more than \$11 million to a cleanup plan that addresses the water-pollution problems at Galena, the first site.

The announcement Tuesday will not result in an immediate flow of federal funds, however. The EPA list is only proposed sites, which means the public will have two months to tell the government whether it

thinks creating the Superfund site in Jasper County is a good idea.

"We've never had a Superfund site that wasn't controversial, said Jack McGraw, an EPA assistant administrator in charge of the program. The agency gets it from both sides — those who oppose the designation and those who want the job done more quickly," he said.

After the EPA reviews the comments, it will decide whether to make Jasper County a Superfund site. McGraw said 97 percent of the proposed sites become eligible for federal cleanup funds.

There are 799 sites and 378 proposed sites on the National Priorities List. The EPA has found 28,000 sites across the country that potentially are hazardous. So far 32 sites have been cleaned up by the EPA since the program was created in 1981.

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